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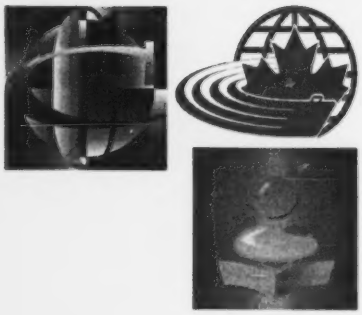
Research Paper

Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics

Education and Labour Market Transitions in Young Adulthood



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Research papers

Education and Labour Market Transitions in Young Adulthood

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Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

Acronyms

CEGEP	Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
LFS	Labour Force Survey
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
STC	Statistics Canada
YITS	Youth in Transition Survey

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1. Introduction

Young adulthood is filled with major life events and pursuing higher education is one of the most common transitions. It is also the time when many young adults enter the labour market, move out of their parents' household and begin family formation. These significant events affect each other and impact the rest of their lives.

Given the significance of these life events and their potential long lasting effects, it is important to try to understand these transitions. However, given their complexities and intertwining nature, studying them requires unique sets of data, such as the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS). This data is longitudinal, where the same set of respondents is interviewed at set time intervals. As such, the YITS data base is ideal for studying life transitions through time.

This report presents results from the five cycles of YITS. Descriptive in nature, this report looks at education, early labour market outcomes and family formation of these young adults. The report is structured in the following way. First, educational pathways are explored. Second, early transitions into the labour market are analyzed. Third, transitions associated with family formation are discussed. Finally, the report provides a summary of some key findings.

The Youth in Transition Survey

The Youth in Transition Survey started in 2000 when the participants between 18 and 20 years of age were interviewed for the first time. Subsequently they were interviewed four more times – every two years.

Data in this report reflects the situation of the young adults at the end of each reference period, i.e. December 1999, when they were 18 to 20 years old, December 2001 when they were 20 to 22 years old, etc. The last data collection occurred in 2008 when the respondents reached the ages of 26 to 28.

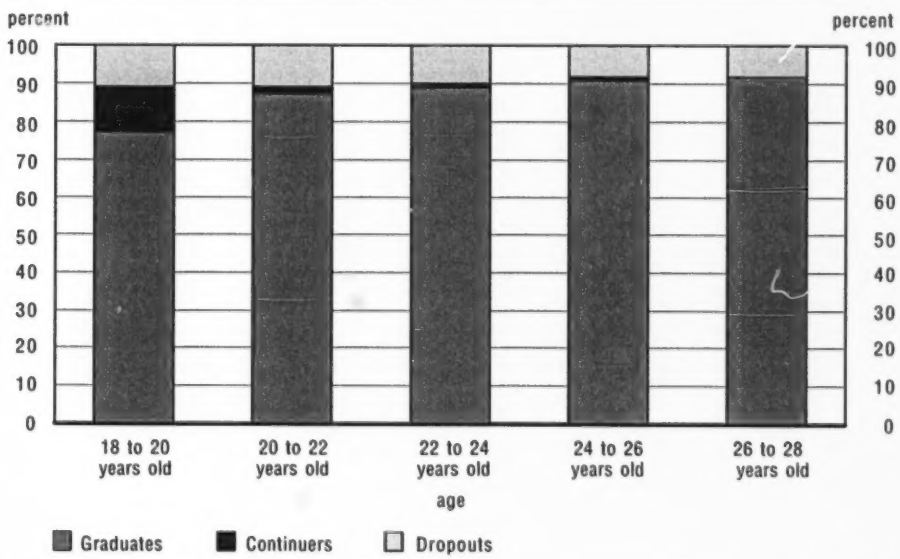
Additional information about the survey is presented in Appendix 1.

2. Education transitions

Graduation from high school

When interviewed in 2000, students were 18 to 20 years old (Chart 1). By that time, 77% had graduated from high school, 13% were high school continuers, and 11% were high school dropouts. As expected, the proportion of continuers decreased over the eight years covered by the survey: by December 2007 all participants were either graduates or dropouts. Some dropouts returned to school, so that the proportion of dropouts decreased by 4 percentage points to 7%. The proportion of graduates increased with each data collection and by the time participants were 26 to 28 years old, 92% of them had graduated from high school. During the entire time, there were more female graduates than male graduates and less female dropouts than male dropouts (see Table A.2.1 in Appendix 2).

Chart 1
High school status over time



Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Postsecondary education

The proportion of participants who had undertaken postsecondary education increased from 55% when they were 18 to 20 years old to 81% when they were 26 to 28. (Table 1). The largest increase in postsecondary education participation occurred when participants were 20 to 22 years old, following the largest increase in high school graduation. By the time participants were 26 to 28 years old, 42% had undertaken university, 43% had undertaken college, and 29% had undertaken other postsecondary education (some of them attended two types of postsecondary institutions). The most common form of postsecondary education attempted during the entire time for both males and females was college (at 43%). The second most common was university (at 42%), then other postsecondary education at 29%. More females than males attempted postsecondary education in eight years. By the time they were between 26 and 28 years of age, postsecondary education participation for females surpassed males by 8 percentage points for university and 7 percentage points for college, although it was almost identical for 'other postsecondary education' (for example, technical institute, trade/vocational school, private training institute or business school or any other school above high school such as firefighters training or police academy etc.).

Participation for females in all forms of postsecondary education remained higher than for males. Early on a higher proportion of females pursued their studies after high school and males decided otherwise. Even though participation of both genders increased over the years, males were never able to close the gender gap.

Table 1

Postsecondary participation over time

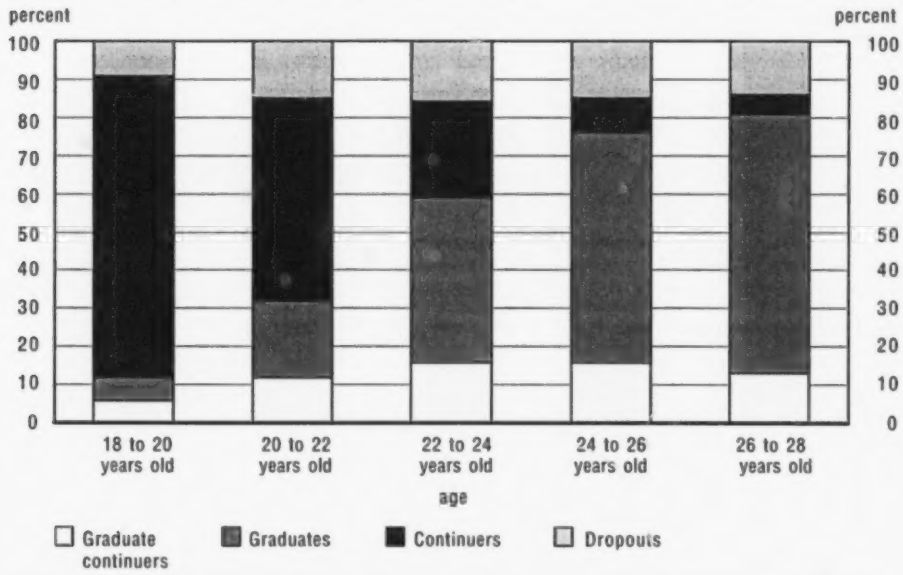
	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
			percent		
All					
Overall postsecondary participation	55	72	77	79	81
University participation	21	33	37	40	42
College/CEGEP participation	26	35	39	42	43
Other postsecondary participation	11	17	22	26	29
Male					
Overall postsecondary participation	50	67	73	75	77
University participation	19	30	34	37	38
College/CEGEP participation	23	32	36	38	40
Other postsecondary participation	11	16	21	25	28
Female					
Overall postsecondary participation	59	77	81	84	85
University participation	24	37	41	44	46
College/CEGEP participation	29	38	41	45	47
Other postsecondary participation	12	18	23	26	29

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Of those participants who undertook postsecondary education, 68% had graduated by the time they were 26 to 28 years old and an additional 13% had graduated and were pursuing further education (Chart 2). When they were 18 to 20 years old, 79% were pursuing their first postsecondary credential. Eight years later, when they were 26 to 28 years old, all but 5% had graduated, continued on to other studies, or dropped out. The largest jump of 6 percentage points in the dropout rate was when they were in their early twenties. While the percentage of high school dropouts decreased consistently with time, the number of postsecondary education dropouts increased from 9% to 16% in four years between the age of 18 to 20 and 22 to 24, then back down to 14% when they were 26 to 28 years old, as some dropouts returned to finish their education. Females continued to surpass males in graduation and graduate continuation rates but the difference remained within 2 to 4 percentage points of each other.

Chart 2

Postsecondary education status over time



Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Since university degree programs are longer, none of the university students had graduated when they were 18 to 20 years old. The largest increases occurred in their early twenties, when the proportion of university graduates jumped from 5% to 30%, then from 30% to 53% to reach 62% in December 2007, when they were 26 to 28 years of age (Table 2). Not surprisingly, as the proportion of university graduates increased over time, the proportion of university continuers decreased consistently. The proportion of university *graduate* continuers (post graduate education), however, increased with the proportion of university graduates until 2006, and then decreased from 16% to 13%. The proportion of graduate continuers

for college and other postsecondary education remained between 1% and 3% over the eight years. For all levels of postsecondary education, the proportion of dropouts increased by the most percentage points when they were between the age of 18 to 20 and 20 to 22 years old. For university students, the dropout rate increased over time, while for college and other postsecondary education students, the dropout rates increased slightly after the first two years and stayed constant for the rest of the period. College students had the highest dropout rate during each data collection, and university students had the lowest rate.

Table 2
Postsecondary status over time

	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
			percent		
University status					
Graduate continuers	F	2[E]	11	16	13
Graduates	F	5	30	53	62
Continuers	92	79	44	15	8
Dropouts	8	14	15	16	17
College status					
Graduate continuers	1[E]	3	3	2	2
Graduates	15	40	58	65	69
Continuers	70	35	15	8	5
Dropouts	14	22	24	25	24
Other postsecondary education status					
Graduate continuers	2[E]	3[E]	3[E]	3[E]	3[E]
Graduates	18	41	55	62	67
Continuers	71	35	19	13	8
Dropouts	9	21	23	22	22

[E] use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Educational attainment

It is no surprise that the proportions of those with a high school diploma or less decreased over the eight years (Table 3). The proportions of those with postsecondary education attainment increased with each data collection, as participants had time to complete their educational programs. While the proportion of those with college attainment increased by the largest amount when they were between the age of 20 to 22 and 22 to 24, university attainment increased the most later, when they were in their mid-twenties. As expected, it is only when participants were 22 to 24 years old that they completed graduate degrees.

By the time they reached 26 to 28 years old, the vast majority had achieved their highest level of schooling. A high school diploma was the most common educational attainment at 28%. Next, college program and Bachelor's degree attainment were both at 24%, while graduate degree attainment was at 6%. When

they were 26 to 28 years old, 8% remained at less than a high school diploma, and 10% attained other postsecondary education. Gender differences should be noted, however; a high school diploma was the most frequent credential for men at 33% but for women, a college diploma was the most frequent at 25%. More females than males had attained postsecondary education when they were 26 to 28 years old. The proportion of males with educational attainment of high school or less surpassed that of females by 13 percentage points. Females exceeded males by 2 percentage points for college programs, and by 6 percentage points for Bachelor's degrees. There were twice as many females as males that attained post graduate education. For other postsecondary education, the numbers were similar, 10% for males and 11% for females.

After 24 years of age, there was little improvement in educational attainment for those who had less than high school. In contrast, those who had a high school diploma were able to increase their attainment. The proportion of young adults who attained a college diploma or other postsecondary education leveled off around 22 to 24 years old. University degrees took longer to obtain with the proportion of students who completed a Bachelor's degree leveling off later at 24 to 26 years old.

Table 3
Highest level of education attained by gender

	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
			percent		
All					
Less than high school diploma	23	13	10	8	8
High school diploma	70	64	45	33	28
College diploma	5	15	21	22	24
Other postsecondary education	2	6	9	9	10
Bachelor degree	F	2	14	24	24
Other university above bachelor	..	F	1 E	4	6
Male					
Less than high school diploma	27	15	12	10	9
High school diploma	68	65	49	37	33
College diploma	4	13	19	21	23
Other postsecondary education	1	5	8	9	10
Bachelor degree	F	2 E	11	20	21
Other university above bachelor	..	x	1	3	4
Female					
Less than high school diploma	20	11	8	7	6
High school diploma	72	62	42	28	23
College diploma	5	17	22	23	25
Other postsecondary education	3	7	10	10	11
Bachelor degree	x	3	17	26	27
Other university above bachelor	..	F	1 E	5	8

.. not available for a specific reference period
x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
E use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

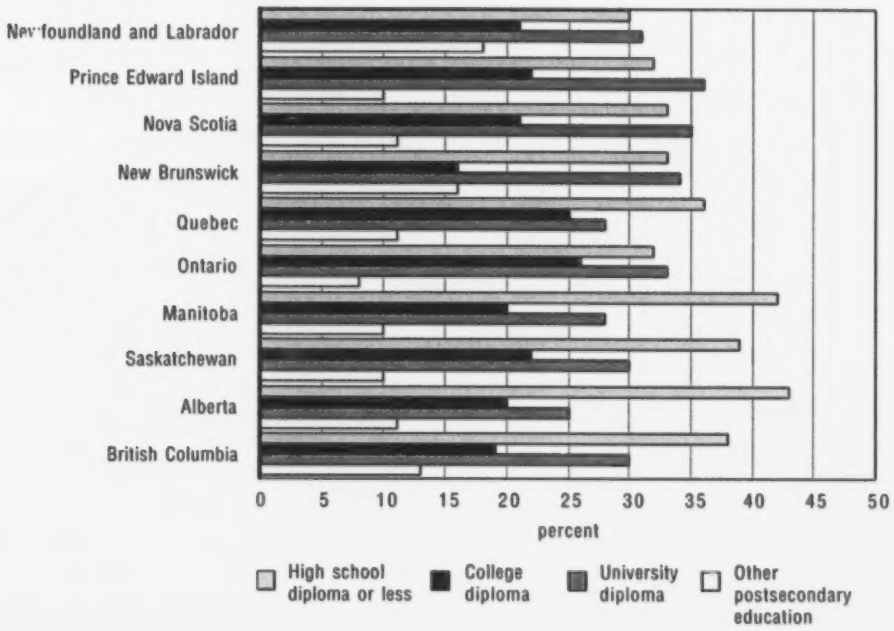
Characteristics associated with education attainment

Previous studies conducted with YITS data demonstrated a relationship between postsecondary participation and various demographic, family and school characteristics (Shaienks and Gluszynski, 2007). Attainment was also associated with these characteristics.

The Atlantic Provinces and Ontario had the highest proportion of youth who obtained degrees from universities (Chart 3). The western provinces and Quebec had the highest proportion of youth who had a high school diploma or less. Quebec and Ontario had the highest proportion of youth with a college/CEGEP diploma as their highest level of education attained. The different conditions of the labour market in the provinces may have had an impact on the decision of youth to pursue postsecondary studies or not.

Chart 3

Highest level of education attained by province[1]



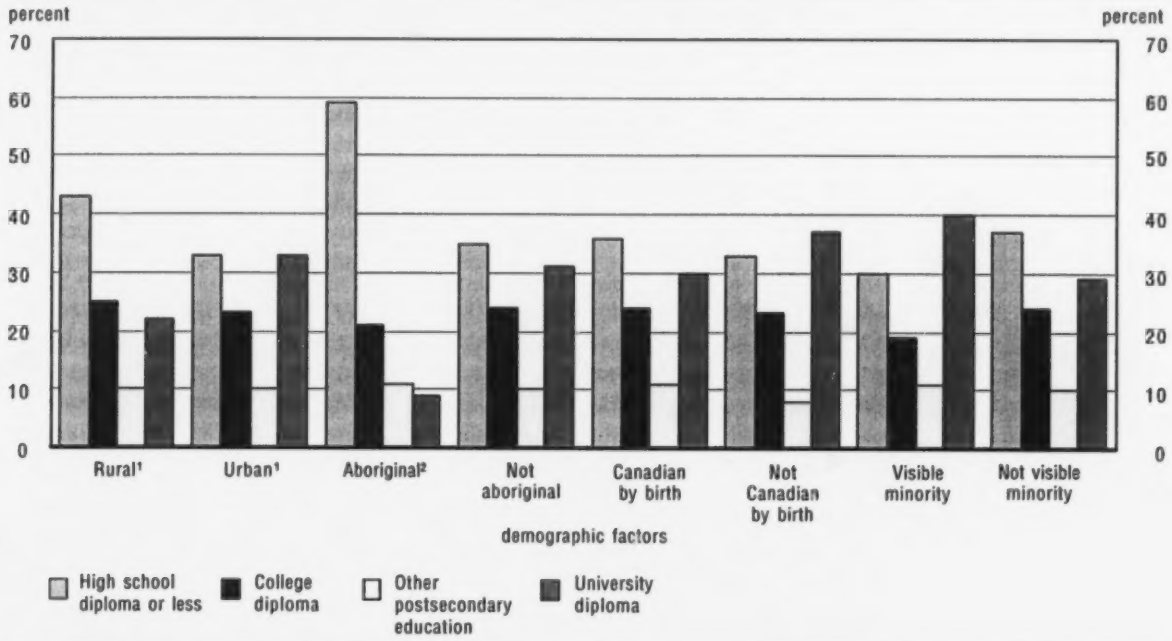
1. Province of residence at 18 to 20 years old.

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

The type of community in which the youth were residents when they were in high school was also related with postsecondary participation. Having to study in a college or a university far from home certainly adds to the cost of postsecondary education. A higher proportion of youth from a rural community completed their studies with a high school diploma or less (Chart 4). The proportion of youth who obtained a university degree, either a bachelor or a graduate degree, was 50% higher for residents of urban communities compared to those from a rural environment.

Chart 4

Highest level of education attained by selected demographic factors



1. Type of community where they lived at 18-20 years old.
2. Off-reserve Aboriginal population only.

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

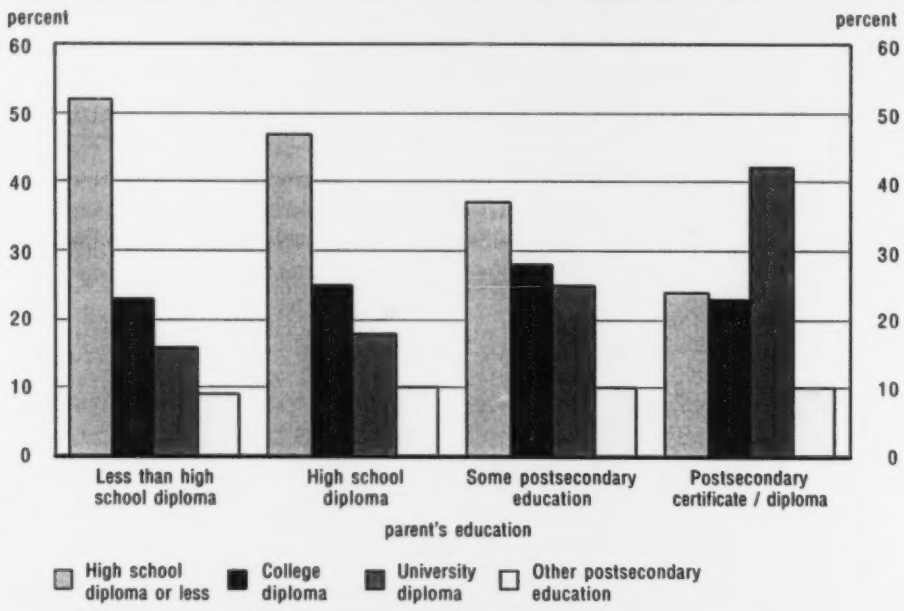
Almost 60% of Aboriginal[1] youth off-reserves had a high school diploma or less by age 26 to 28. Less than 10% obtained a university degree. When compared to the non-Aboriginal population, the differences were substantial. Almost 20% of Aboriginal youth had less than a high school diploma compared to 7% for the non-Aboriginal youth.

A higher proportion of visible minority youth and youth who were not born in Canada obtained a university degree compared with Canadian born and non-visible minority youth.

Parents provide moral and financial support depending on their values and attitudes towards postsecondary education. Family structure, parental education background and the importance given to postsecondary studies were all related to education attainment of the youth. The proportion of youth who obtained a university degree went up as parental education increased (Chart 5). The proportion of bachelor recipients was twice as high for youth whose parents had completed postsecondary education compared with youth whose parents had less than a high school diploma.

Five times more young adults whose parents did not complete their high school did not obtain their high school diploma themselves, compared with young adults whose parents completed postsecondary education.

Chart 5
Highest level of education attained by parent's education



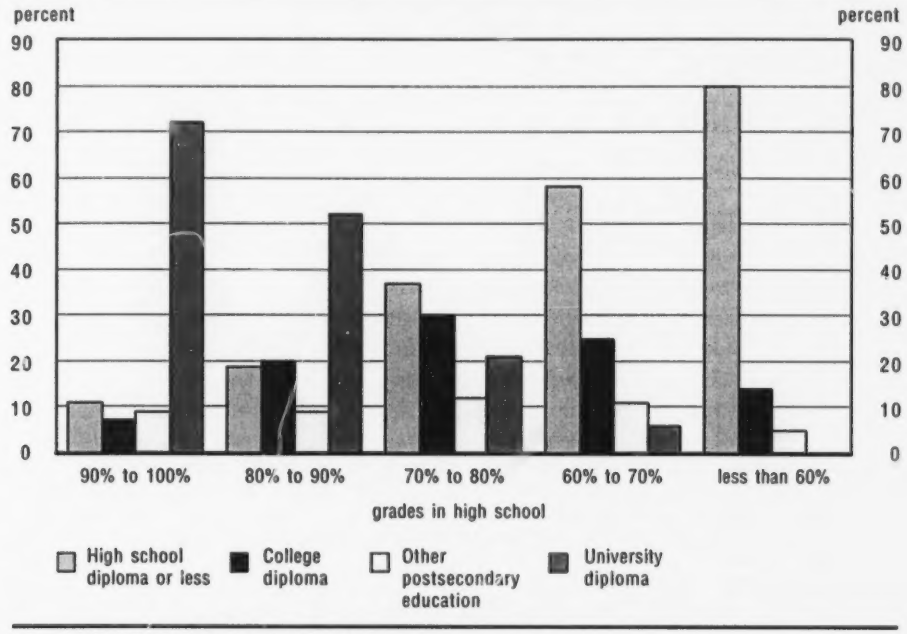
Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

The family structure also seemed to be a factor in education attainment. The proportion of youth who had a high school diploma or less was smaller for youth who had two parents as opposed to a single-parent family or other family structure. University degrees were also more prominent amongst students who lived with both parents when they were in high school.

The longitudinal nature of the data in the Youth in Transition Survey enabled the construction of educational pathways of students over time according to their high school behaviour including earned grades, time spent on homework and dropout episode. Not only good marks but also good working habits and school behaviour were related to education achievement. Not surprisingly, over half of the students who reported an overall average above 80 percent in high school obtained a university degree (Chart 6). What is worth mentioning, however, is that almost 20% of students who reported less than a passing average in high school were able to obtain a postsecondary credential, either from a college/CEGEP or from another type of non-university postsecondary institution. Though high school grades were a requirement for postsecondary education, they appear to affect the type of credential rather than preventing enrolment.

Chart 6

Highest level of education attained by high school grades



Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

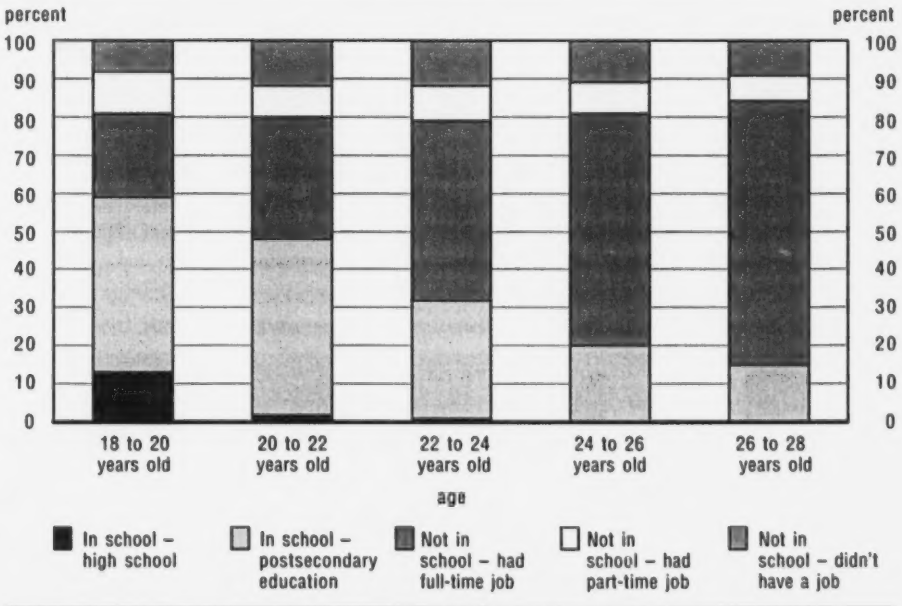
A dropout episode in high school had consequences in terms of education attainment. Over 75% of the youth who had a dropout episode at one point during high school terminated their studies with a high school diploma or less (Table A.2.5 in Appendix 2).

The working habits developed in high school persist in postsecondary education. Twice as many students who spent more than three hours per week on homework in high school obtained a bachelor degree and three times as many got a degree above a bachelor in comparison with those who spent less than three hours per week studying in high school.

3. School to work transitions

As participants got older, the proportion attending school decreased as the proportion of those working increased (Chart 7). High school participation eventually dropped to zero. While postsecondary education participation was 46% when they were 18 to 20 years old, as they got older, postsecondary participation decreased consistently to reach 15% eight years later when they were 26 to 28 years old. Among those working and not attending school, full-time work increased as participants got older, and the percentage of part-time workers decreased and varied slightly over time. Over the eight years of the survey, there was a larger proportion of females than males attending school and a smaller proportion of females in the labour market (Table 4). Among those working and not in school, there was a larger proportion of females working part-time than males. Though there were initially as many females as males who were not in school and not working, by the time participants were 26 to 28 years old, there were more than twice as many females as males in this situation.

Chart 7
School to work transitions



Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Differences in labour force status in the Youth in Transition Survey and the Labour Force Survey

School to work status was established at the end of the reference period as of December 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007. The respondents were not necessarily in that situation for the whole reference period of two years.

Furthermore, the school/work status established in the Youth in Transition Survey cannot be associated with the labour force status in the Labour Force Survey because respondents were not asked if they were looking for a job during the months where they were not in school and not working. Therefore, youth that were not in school and did not have a job were not necessarily "unemployed" since they were not necessarily in the labour force. As such, the proportion of youth in that situation cannot be considered as an "unemployment rate".

Table 4

School to work transitions over time

	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
			percent		
Male					
In school	57	44	31	19	14
High school	15	2[E]	1[E]	F	F
Postsecondary education	42	42	30	18	14
Not in school and had a job	35	43	59	71	80
Full-time	26	37	52	65	75
Part-time	9	6	7	6	5
Not in school and didn't have a job	8	13	10	10	6
Female					
In school	61	50	33	21	15
High school	10	2[E]	1[E]	F	F
Postsecondary education	51	48	32	20	15
Not in school and had a job	31	37	52	67	72
Full-time	17	27	41	57	63
Part-time	13	10	11	10	9
Not in school and didn't have a job	8	12	14	12	13

[E] use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

How is education attainment related to labour outcomes?

Generally, between the age of 26 and 28, independently of their level of schooling, 15% of young adults were still in school and close to 70% of them had a full-time job. There were, however, significant differences by gender. The proportion of males holding a full-time job was significantly higher than the proportion of females, who were more likely than males to work part time or to not have a job (Table 5). The situation was even more frequent for women with lower levels of education attainment.

Table 5

Highest level of education attained by school/work status and gender

	In school	Not in school – had full-time job	Not in school – had part-time job	Not in school – didn't have a job
	percent			
Male	14	75	4	6
Less than high school diploma	F	79	F	11 [E]
High school diploma	13	73	6 [E]	8
College diploma	11	80	4 [E]	5 [E]
Other post-secondary education	13 [E]	80	F	F
University diploma	23	69	4 [E]	4 [E]
Female	16	62	9	13
Less than high school diploma	F	36	27 [E]	26
High school diploma	12	58	11	19
College diploma	13	66	8	13
Other post-secondary education	19	63	8 [E]	10
University diploma	19	67	7	7

[E] use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

However, since respondents in the Youth in Transition Survey were not asked if they were looking for work during the months when they were not in school and not working, it is impossible to determine if an individual was part of the labour force or not (see text box). Other information available in the survey can shed some light on the differences in labour outcomes between genders.

Compared with men, a very high proportion of women had children, especially those with a lower level of education and those working part time or not working (Table 6). For example, 87% of the women who had less than a high school diploma and did not have a job had children, as did 78% of the women who had a high school diploma and did not have a job. Even among women with university degrees and children, 44% did not work. This suggests that they may have not worked by choice as they were caring for their children.

Table 6

Proportion of youth with children by highest level of education attained, school/work status and gender

	In school	Not in school – had full-time job	Not in school – had part-time job	Not in school – didn't have a job	All
	percent with children				
All					
Less than high school diploma	42 [E]	39	F	56 [E]	41
High school diploma	24	28	40	56	32
College diploma	15 [E]	25	44	49	27
Other postsecondary education	17 [E]	24	53 [E]	48	26
University diploma	7 [E]	11	21 [E]	33	12
Male					
Less than high school diploma	F	33	F	x	30
High school diploma	15 [E]	22	F	F	20
College diploma	F	21	F	F	19
Other postsecondary education	x	18 [E]	x	x	16 [E]
University diploma	7 [E]	11	x	x	10
Female					
Less than high school diploma	56 [E]	61	F	87	58
High school diploma	37 [E]	39	64	78	48
College diploma	19 [E]	28	62	64	34
Other postsecondary education	26 [E]	32	62	66	36
University diploma	F	11	27 [E]	44	14

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

[E] use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Returns of education

Education pays off. For both men and women, a higher income was associated with a higher level of education, independently of their situation on the labour market (Table 7). On average, a university graduate's income was $13,000 higher than the income of someone who had less than a high school diploma. Generally, men had higher income than women. It seems that men had better income than women even when they had a lower level of education. Men who had less than a high school diploma had an income almost twice as high as the income of women with similar qualifications. This may be related to the fact that the proportion of women who were not in school and not working was two or three times higher than the proportion of men in the same situation, depending on their level of education.

The premium for higher education was higher for women than men. The gap between the income associated with the lowest and highest level of education was over $18,000 for women holding full-time jobs. For men, the differential was also at its highest point for full-time job holders, reaching $13,000. These findings were in line with Hansen (2007) who based his analysis on wages per hour and found similar results, where the effect of education on wages was larger for women than for men.

Table 7

Average income by highest level of education attained, school/work status and gender

	In school	Not in school – had full-time job	Not in school – had part-time job	Not in school – didn't have a job	All
			$ income		
All	**30,800**	**44,600**	**23,900**	**19,100**	**38,600**
Less than high school diploma	21,200 E	38,700	19,200 E	16,500	30,900
High school diploma	27,600	40,500	21,800	15,500	34,300
College diploma	30,400	42,800	23,200	20,100	38,000
Other postsecondary education	31,900	45,900	21,700	21,100	40,400
University diploma	32,200	50,300	30,000	26,500	44,100
Male	**34,000**	**48,500**	**26,800**	**25,400**	**44,000**
Less than high school diploma	34,000 E	41,800	F	20,900 E	38,500
High school diploma	28,500	44,200	27,100 E	24,300 E	39,600
College diploma	33,400	49,200	22,500	27,900	45,400
Other postsecondary education	34,800	50,100	24,600 E	32,600 E	46,300
University diploma	36,000	54,800	28,800	25,700 E	48,300
Female	**27,700**	**39,600**	**22,400**	**15,800**	**33,100**
Less than high school diploma	12,100 E	28,200	16,400 E	13,600	19,300
High school diploma	26,300	33,600	17,700	10,200	26,600
College diploma	28,100	35,100	23,600	17,100	30,800
Other postsecondary education	30,100	40,700	20,900	15,100 E	34,500
University diploma	28,700	46,800	30,600	26,800	40,800

E use with caution

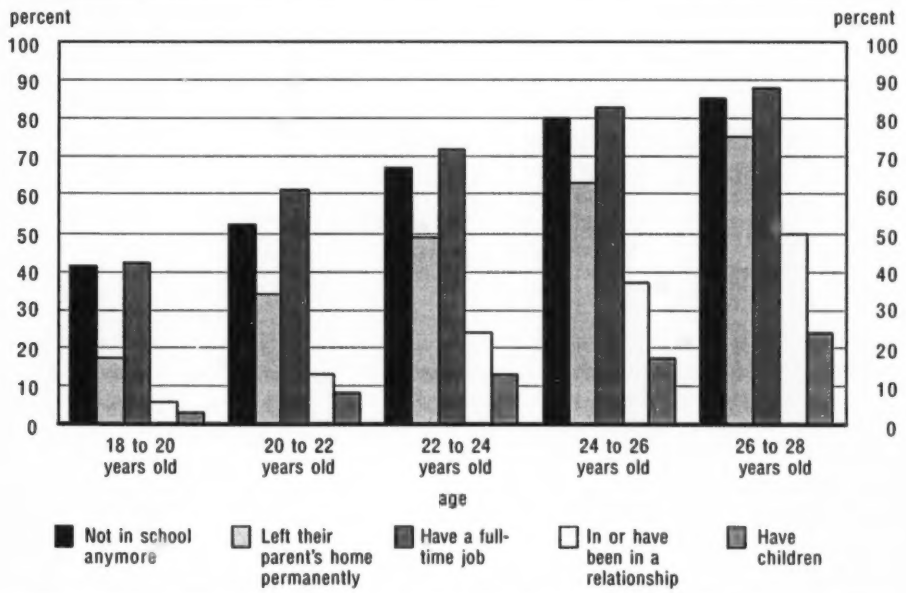
F too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

4. Other life transitions

The most common pathway from school to adult life was to leave school, to find a full-time job, to leave the parental home, to form a relationship and finally to have children (Chart 8).

Chart 8
Life transitions



Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Though the pathway was the same for men and women, the timing of the different transitions was quite different (Table 8). Men left school and started working full time earlier than women. In contrast, women left the parental home, formed a relationship and had children earlier than men. Throughout the five cycles, in comparison with women, a higher proportion of men worked full time and still lived with their parents.

Table 8
Life transitions by gender

	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
			percent		
Male					
Not in school anymore	44	55	69	81	86
Left their parent's home permanently	13	28	43	59	71
Have a full-time job	48	69	78	86	92
In or have been in a relationship	4	9	17	29	42
Have children	1 [E]	4	8	12	18
Female					
Not in school anymore	39	49	66	79	84
Left their parent's home permanently	21	39	55	68	78
Have a full-time job	35	53	66	79	84
In or have been in a relationship	9	18	32	45	57
Have children	6	12	18	23	32

[E] use with caution
Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Life transitions of men and women occurred later than before. Results from a previous study based on census data (Clark, 2007), in 1971, showed that 75% of 22 years old youth had left school, half of them were married and one quarter had children. Youth have delayed quite substantially their transitions to adulthood over the last 35 years (Table 8).

Several factors could explain that delay. One of the most important is the growing labour market demands for education. The high school diploma is now the minimal qualification and postsecondary education is necessary to access an increasing number of jobs.

The economic benefits of education were quite clear. Earnings, as demonstrated in the previous section, were higher for university graduates than for high school graduates. Not only do young adults participate in postsecondary education at a higher rate but previous studies showed that students attend multiple institutions and programs (Shaienks and Gluszynski, 2008) before finally entering the labour market. They often acquire more than one postsecondary diploma. In order to sustain this longer period in school, young adults rely on their parents to help them with tuition fees and other costs related to postsecondary education. Staying home is one way to keep the cost down. They wait until they finish school before living as a couple (marriage or common-law) and having children.

5. Summary

In their twenties young adults experience major life events, such as leaving high school, starting postsecondary education, entering the labour market, leaving their parents' household and beginning family formation. These significant events in their lives have effects beyond their twenties.

At the beginning of the survey in 2000, students were 18 to 20 years old and 77% had graduated from high school, 13% were high school continuers, and 11% were high school dropouts. The proportion of graduates increased over time so that by the time participants were 26 to 28 years old, 92% of them had graduated.

A majority of them undertook postsecondary education. By the time they were 26 to 28 years old, 81% of them had participated in one form or another of postsecondary education, of which 42% had undertaken university, 43% had undertaken college, and 29% had undertaken other postsecondary education. Of those participants who undertook postsecondary education, 68% had graduated by the time they were 26 to 28 years old and an additional 13% had graduated and were pursuing further education. Five percent were pursuing their first postsecondary credential and 14% had left without graduating.

As participants grew older, the proportion of those participants attending school decreased as the proportion of those working increased. High school participation eventually dropped to zero, and postsecondary education participation decreased consistently to reach 15% by age 26 to 28 years. The majority of those 26 to 28 years old worked: close to 70% full time and 7% part time. A tenth of them were not in school and not working, more commonly females. However, a large number of females had children, and probably chose not to go to school or work in order to raise their families.

Over time, the proportion of those with a high school diploma or less decreased and the proportion of those with postsecondary education attainment increased. When they were 26 to 28 years old, the high school diploma was still the most common educational attainment, at 28%. Next, a college diploma and a bachelor degree were both at 24%, while 6% had obtained a graduate diploma. When they were 26 to 28 years old, 7% had less than a high school diploma, and 10% attained other postsecondary education.

Various demographic, family and school characteristics were related with the highest level of education attained by youth. Women, students coming from an urban community, non-Canadian born and visible minority students all achieved higher levels of education. Not surprisingly, good grades and good working habits in high school result in higher educational attainment. The educational background of parents was reflected in their children's educational achievement.

The most common pathway from school to adult life was to leave school, to find a full-time job, to leave the parental home, to form a relationship and finally to have children.

Though the pathway was the same for men and women, the timing of the different transitions was quite different. Men left school and started working full time earlier than women. In contrast, women left the parental home, formed a relationship and had children earlier than men. Throughout the eight years, in comparison with women, a higher proportion of men worked full time and still lived with their parents.

Over the last 35 years, youth have delayed their transitions to adulthood. Young adults participated in postsecondary education at a higher rate to be able to respond to rising demands of the labour market. Additionally, they stayed longer in school, lived with their parents longer and postponed marriage or a common-law relationship and parenthood.

Appendix 1

What is the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS)?

The Youth in Transition Survey is a Canadian longitudinal survey designed to examine the patterns of, and influences on, major transitions in young people's lives, particularly with respect to education, training and work.

Following a major consultation process with key stakeholders across Canada, ten broad objectives were developed for YITS. They are as follows:

1. to examine key transitions in the lives of youth, such as the transition from high school to postsecondary schooling and the initial transition from schooling to the labour market;
2. to better understand educational and labour market pathways and the factors influencing these pathways;
3. to identify educational and occupational pathways that provide a smoother transition to the labour market;
4. to examine the incidence, characteristics, factors and effects of leaving school;
5. to understand the impact of school effects on educational and occupational outcomes;
6. to examine the contribution of work experience programs, part-time jobs, and volunteer activities to skills development and transition to the labour market;
7. to study the attitudes, behaviours, and skills of young people entering the labour market;
8. to gain a better understanding of the determinants of postsecondary entry and postsecondary retention, including education financing;
9. to better understand the role of educational and labour market aspirations and expectations in investment in further education and career choice; and,
10. to explore the educational and occupational pathways of various subgroups, particularly youth "at risk".

In order to address these objectives in a timely fashion, it was decided to collect data from two age groups of youth in the first cycle of the survey in 2000. One began its participation at age 15 and the other at ages 18 to 20. Both cohorts were asked to provide a range of information on their education and employment experiences as well as information on their personal characteristics including, for example, their educational aspirations. The younger group also participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an internationally recognized test to evaluate the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics, and science. Furthermore, an interview was conducted with their parents and a questionnaire was administered to their school principals.

In total, almost 30,000 youth aged 15, and more than 22,000 youth aged 18 to 20 from the ten provinces participated in the first cycle of YITS in 2000. Analysis for both cohorts was presented in different publications available to download for free through the Internet at www.statcan.gc.ca.

Follow-up interviews with the YITS participants took place in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008. At the time of their last interview, the two cohorts were aged 23 and 26 to 28 respectively.

YITS Methodology

Target population

YITS has two target populations: a cohort of individuals who were 18 to 20 years old on December 31, 1999 and a cohort of students who were 15 years-old on December 31, 1999. This section deals more specifically with the older cohort, which constitute the subject of this report.

Sample design

The target population for the 18 to 20 year-old cohort comprises residents of the ten provinces of Canada who were born between 1979 and 1981. These individuals turned 18 to 20 during 1999, the reference year for cycle 1.

The design implemented for the 18 to 20 year-old cohort is based on certain groups of households that were in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) between January 1997 and December 1999. Individuals who were full-time members of the armed forces and persons living on Indian reserves or in northern and remote areas are excluded from LFS and were therefore also excluded from this cohort. From these LFS households, a sample of individuals, born between 1979 and 1981 or those estimated to be between 18 to 20 years of age during 1999, was selected.

The sample consisted of 29,164 individuals aged 18 to 20 years old in cycle 1. In total, 23,594 (80.9%) individuals responded in cycle 1. Respondents who refused to share their data were taken out of the sample for cycle 2, which reduced it to 22,378. In the following cycles the response rates were 83.9% in cycle 2, 78.9% in cycle 3, 83.8% in cycle 4 and 80.0% in cycle 5. The sample went from 18,743 in cycle 3 to 14,753 in cycle 4 to 12,360 in cycle 5.

Data collection

While separate data collection strategies were employed for each of the cohorts in cycle 1, the same data collection strategy was used for both cohorts in cycle 2 and subsequent cycles. Data collection usually occurs between mid-January and mid-June using computer assisted telephone interviewing.

The following table shows the response rates by province and cycle.

Table A.1.1
Response rates, cycles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5	Longitudinal
				percent		
Canada	76.7	83.8	78.7	83.8	80.0	34.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	84.9	83.0	78.3	81.8	74.3	33.6
Prince Edward Island	81.0	82.4	80.0	86.8	79.9	37.7
Nova Scotia	80.6	81.9	79.6	86.7	78.3	35.9
New Brunswick	76.3	75.6	79.2	85.2	75.2	29.4
Quebec	75.0	85.8	80.4	85.9	87.2	39.0
Ontario	75.4	86.4	75.8	81.1	75.9	30.5
Manitoba	81.7	86.5	78.1	89.9	82.4	41.1
Saskatchewan	82.0	82.9	86.4	83.5	80.9	40.0
Alberta	73.7	80.2	83.3	81.3	81.0	32.7
British Columbia	71.6	79.8	73.0	81.7	78.9	27.0
Number of respondents	22,378	18,743	14,753	12,360	9,946	9,946

Appendix 2

Table A.2.1
High school status over time

High school status	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
	percent				
All					
Graduates	77	87	89	91	92
Continuers	12	2	1	1 E	0 E
Dropouts	11	11	10	8	8
Male					
Graduates	73	84	87	89	91
Continuers	15	2 E	1 E	1 E	F
Dropouts	12	14	12	10	9
Female					
Graduates	80	89	92	93	94
Continuers	10	2 E	1 E	F	F
Dropouts	9	9	7	6	6

E use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Table A.2.2
Postsecondary education status over time

Overall postsecondary status	18 to 20 years old	20 to 22 years old	22 to 24 years old	24 to 26 years old	26 to 28 years old
	percent				
All					
Graduate continuers	6	12	16	16	13
Graduates	6	20	43	60	68
Continuers	79	53	25	9	5
Dropouts	9	15	16	15	14
Male					
Graduate continuers	5	11	15	15	13
Graduates	6	19	40	57	66
Continuers	79	54	27	11	6
Dropouts	10	17	18	17	16
Female					
Graduate continuers	7	13	17	18	14
Graduates	7	22	45	62	70
Continuers	79	52	24	7	4
Dropouts	7	13	14	13	12

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Table A.2.3
Highest level of education attained by selected demographics

	Type of community[1]		Aboriginal status[2]		Canadian born		Visible minority	
	Rural	Urban	Aboriginal	Non Aboriginal	Yes	No	Yes	No
	percent		percent		percent		percent	
Less than high school diploma	11	6	18 E	7	8	5 E	5 E	8
High school diploma	32	27	41	28	28	28	25	29
College diploma	25	23	21 E	24	24	23	19	24
Other postsecondary education	10	10	11 E	10	11	8 E	11 E	10
Bachelor degree	18	26	7 E	25	24	29	32	23
Other university above bachelor	4	7	F	6	6	8 E	8 E	6

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

1. Type of community where they lived at 18 to 20 years old.
2. Off-reserve Aboriginal population only.

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Table A.2.4
Highest level of education attained by province[1]

	Less than high school diploma	High school diploma	College diploma	Other post-secondary education	Bachelor degree	Other university above bachelor
	percent					
Newfoundland and Labrador	4 E	26	21	18	28	3 E
Prince Edward Island	F	28	22	10 E	30	6 E
Nova Scotia	6 E	27	21	11	28	8 E
New Brunswick	4 E	29	16	16	29	5 E
Quebec	9	27	25	11	21	7
Ontario	6	26	26	8	26	7
Manitoba	8 E	34	20	10 E	23	5 E
Saskatchewan	5 E	34	22	10	27	3 E
Alberta	11	33	20	11	20	5 E
British Columbia	7 E	30	19	13	25	5 E

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

1. Province of residence at 18 to 20 years old.

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Table A.2.5

Highest level of education attained by selected high school characteristics

	Grades in high school					Ever drop out		Homework	
	90% to 100%	80% to 90%	70% to 80%	60% to 70%	Less than 60%	Yes	No	3 hours or less	More than 3 hours
	percent					percent		percent	
Less than high school diploma	F	2 E	5	15	37	42	0	10	4
High school diploma	9 E	17	32	43	43	35	27	35	23
College diploma	7 E	20	30	25	14 E	14	25	26	22
Other postsecondary education	9 E	9	12	11	5 E	7 E	11	11	10
Bachelor degree	50	41	18	5	x	2 E	29	15	32
Other university above bachelor	22	11	3	F	x	x	8	3	9

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

Table A.2.6

Highest level of education attained by selected family characteristics

	Highest educational attainment of parents				Parent's opinion on the importance of pursuing education after high school		Family structure[1]		
	Less than high school diploma	High school diploma	Some post-secondary education	Post-secondary certificate / diploma	Important	Not important	Living with both birth parents	Living with single parent	Other
	percent				percent		percent		
Less than high school diploma	15	11	4 E	3	5	21	6	13	9
High school diploma	37	36	33	21	26	43	26	35	36
College diploma	23	25	28	23	25	18	24	20	27
Bachelor degree	14	15	20	33	27	8 E	27	19	16
Other university above bachelor	F	3 E	5 E	9	7	F	7	4 E	3 E
Other postsecondary education	9	10	10	10	11	9	11	9	10

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

1. The family structure is the structure that was present when the respondent was in high school.

Source: Statistics Canada, Youth in Transition Survey, cycles 1 to 5.

References

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Shaienks, Danielle and Gluszynski, Tomasz, *Participation in Postsecondary Education: Graduates, Continuers and Drop Outs, Results from YITS Cycle 4.* Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Ottawa, November 2007.

Shaienks, Danielle, Gluszynski, Tomasz and Bayard, Justin, *Postsecondary Education – Participation and Dropping out: Differences Across University, College and Other Types of Postsecondary Institutions,* Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Ottawa, November 2008.

Endnote

1. The sample design of the YITS 18-20 cohort was determined by the sample design of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Specifically excluded from the survey's coverage are residents of the Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories, persons living on Indian Reserves, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces and inmates of institutions. The YITS sample is therefore **not** representative of the aboriginal population as a whole, but is only representative of the off reserve aboriginal population.

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The **Culture Statistics Program** creates and disseminates timely and comprehensive information on the culture sector in Canada. The program manages a dozen regular census surveys and databanks to produce data that support policy decision and program management requirements. Issues include the economic impact of culture, the consumption of culture goods and services, government, personal and corporate spending on culture, the culture labour market, and international trade of culture goods and services. Analysis is also published in *Focus on Culture* (87-004-XIE, free, http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=87-004-X).

The **Tourism Statistics Program** provides information on domestic and international tourism. The program covers the Canadian Travel Survey and the International Travel Survey. Together, these surveys shed light on the volume and characteristics of trips and travellers to, from and within Canada.

The **Centre for Education Statistics** develops and delivers a comprehensive program of pan-Canadian education statistics and analysis in order to support policy decisions and program management, and to ensure that accurate and relevant information concerning education is available to the Canadian public and to other educational stakeholders. The Centre conducts fifteen institutional and over ten household education surveys. Analysis is also published in *Education Matters* (81-004-XIE, free, http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=81-004-X), and in the *Analytical Studies Branch research paper series* (11F0019MIE, free, http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=11F0019M).

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